

A Short and Easie
METHOD
WITH THE
DEISTS,
WHEREIN THE
CERTAINTY
OF THE
Christian Religion

Is demonstrated by *Infallible Proof* from

Four Rules,

WHICH ARE
Incompatible to any *Imposture* that ever yet
has been, or that can *possibly* be.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

The Fourth Edition.

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A Short and Easy

METHOD

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TO BE OBSERVED BY ALL

WHO USE THE LIBRARY

OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

IN THE YEAR 1800

The PREFACE.

I. **I** Have been desir'd to say something more concerning Apollonius Tyanæus, hereafter mention'd, p. 42. tho' it lies upon the Deists to produce him, if they dare pitch upon him as an Instance, to which they are fairly invited: But herein only shew their Modesty; they are Bashful in the Face of an Argument, but where a Jest, a Grin, or a Laugh will carry it off, they are Unmerciful, and Triumph clamorously. They have brought upon the Stage no Competitor to our Blessed Saviour, equal to their Apollonius. Therefore I nam'd him, and provok'd them, (but I cannot) to bring it to a Tryal. For the sake therefore of some Readers, who may not know the Story, I will here give this short Account of him.

First then, let it be observ'd, That what Account we have of Apollonius Tyanæus, is from Philostratus, who liv'd an

Hundred Years after the Time in which this Apollonius is said to have flourish'd.

Whence had Philostratus this? He says, from the Book of one Damis, who had been a Companion of Apollonius's. How came Philostratus by this Book? He says, that an Acquaintance of Damis's brought the Empress Julia to the Knowledge of his Commentaries, which till then had not been publish'd. (I give it you in the Words of Mr. Blount's Translation.) And that the Empress commanded Philostratus to Transcribe those Commentaries, and bestow some pains on the Relations contain'd in them. What Pains was this? Only to Transcribe? No, that was small Pains, and not fit to be Impos'd upon so great an Orator as Philostratus, it was the Office of a Clerk. But, it seems, this Book of Damis's was so Poorly wrote, as not fit to be expos'd to view, at least of the Empress, who, as Philostratus tells us,

The Preface.

iii

us, was much addicted to the study of Rhetorick. For, (*says he*) Damis had given a Plain but Unelegant Description of them, *i. e. of the Acts of Apollonius. Therefore the Pains that Philostratus took, he tells us, was upon the Relations of Apollonius that were in the Commentaries of Damis. And to fit them for the Ear of an Empress, who lov'd Rhetorick, alias, Romancing and fine Stories. So that we are not sure we have one Word of the Commentaries of Damis. But this we are sure of, That we have them only as they were New-Drest, and Vampt by an Orator, to please the Fancy of a Rhetorical Lady.*

But, which is more, Philostratus do's not pretend, that he confin'd himself to the Commentaries of Damis. For he tells us, (ibid. l. i. c. 3.) That in Composing these Books of his, he had Gather'd together the Dispersed Relations of Apollonius into one Volume.

And Names another Author, one Mœ-ragenes, who had Wrote Four Books concerning Apollonius: But he says, that ther is no Credit to be given to them. Why? Because, (says he) Mœ-ragenes, in his Books, seemeth to be altogether Ignorant of his (Apollo-nius's) Actions. It seems they were not so Romantick, as the Commentaries of Damis, and so less fit for an Enter-tainment to the Empress. But they do not seem to be the less True for that. And Philostratus gives no other Reason against them, i. e. They were not for his Purpose, which was, to Compose something New and Surprizing, to Gratifie the Empress.

Let me observe here, That this was an Age, wherein the Melesiaca, or Feign'd Romantick Stories were much in vogue: Such as Heliodorus his Ethiopicks, The Amours of Clitophon and Leucippe, &c. And it is very Probable, that Phi-stratus

The Preface.

V

Iostratus living, as he tells, at Court, wou'd Endeavour not to be out of the Fashion.

And indeed, if he had been to compose a Romance, to have Appear'd like any thing of Truth, he cou'd not have Introduc'd it upon less Authority, and more Precarious a Foundation, than this which he has given for his Hero, Apollonius.

So extreamly Slight, that some very Learned Men have, not without Reason, Doubted whether ever ther was such a Man as this Apollonius.

It is true that Origen (Contr. Cels.) do's mention him. But so he did likewise the Recognition of St. Clement, (Tom. 3. Comment. in Genes. in Philocal. c. 23.) which now are taken for Granted to have been wrote only in his Name. And it is no strange thing, that some Wise and Learned Men may be Impos'd upon, in Matters of this Nature.

But neither Wise nor Foolish, that have Eyes in their Head, can be Impos'd upon in the Four Marks hereafter given p. 5. whereby to Ascertain the Truth of any Matter of Fact. And the Deists not daring to bring the Matter of Fact of Apollonius to the Test of these Rules: All that they can possibly Infer from their Legends, is, That Perhaps they may be True. Whereas, they must Acknowledge, unless they will deny the Certainty of all their Senses, That the Matters of Fact of Moses, and of Christ, are Certainly, Un-dubitably, and Infallibly True.

And ther is almost the same Certainty, That those of Apollonius must be False. Because, as Men cannot be Impos'd upon in such Notorious Matters of Fact: It is next to the same Impossibility, That they shou'd Forget them; at least, so Soon as were these which are told of Apollonius. For Example, His freeing the
City

The Preface.

vii

City of Ephesus from the Plague. His Vanishing out of the Presence of Domitian, and his Court, when he was arraign'd before him. And his familiar Converse with many other Kings, and Wonders done before them; and the Mighty Estimation, even to Adoration, which he is thereby said to have obtain'd all over the World.

*Now is it Possible, That all this cou'd be so Totally Forgot, as that no Mention at all shou'd be made of it for 100 Years after these things were said to be done? Insomuch that Philostratus Complains, in the Introduction to his Legend, (l. i. c. i.) That whereas Pythagoras, and other Ancient Philosophers, who had liv'd many Ages before, were still Remember'd with great Veneration, yet that Apollonius, who, as he says, Came nearer to Divine Wisdom than Pythagoras himself, is not yet known among Men--- tho' he Lived
neither*

neither very Long ago, nor yet very lately.

Was it Possible, that the Death of so Famous a Person shou'd not have been Greatly Notic'd? And his Sepulcher Honour'd and Visited? Yet Philostratus tells, that ther was No Certainty of the Place where he Dyed: That some said it was at Ephesus; Some at Rhodes; and Some at Crete. And that His Sepulcher cou'd no where be found. To help this, Some bestow'd an Apotheosis upon Him. And would have it, That He was taken up into Heaven. But did any body see it? No. That is not so much as Alledged. Nor could Philostratus believe it, who said that he had Travell'd far and near to find out his Sepulcher, but cou'd not Hear of it.

And if he was so Universally Famous as Philostratus has Represented Him, cou'd Moeragenes have wrote His Life, And be Altogether Ignorant of his

The Preface.

ix

his Actions, as Philostratus has Accused him? Mœragenes wrote before Philostratus; And therefore had better Reason to know. And if Philostratus had Transmitted to us the Commentaries of Mœragenes, as well as what Helps he took out of those of Damis, or Father'd upon him; We shou'd no Doubt, have had a more Moderate Account of Apollonius; since Philostratus do's confess, That for that Only Reason he had rejected the Books of Mœragenes. And if they were in being when he Wrote, he was under a Necessity of saying something against them (tho' what he has said Confirms them the more) because they gave the Lie so Notoriously to his New Romance of Apollonius.

But now, to sum up all, let us suppose to the utmost, that all this said Romance were True, what wou'd this amount to? Only that Apollonius did such things. What then? What if he were
so

so Vertuous a Person, as that God shou'd have given him the Power to Work several Miracles? This wou'd no ways hurt the Argument that is here brought against the Deists: Because Apollonius set up no new Religion, nor did he Pretend that he was sent with any Revelation from Heaven, to introduce any New sort of the Worship of God. So that it is of no Consequence to the World, whether these were True or Pretended Miracles: Whether Apollonius was an Honest Man, or a Magician: Or Whether Ever ther was such a Man or not. For he left no Law or Gospel behind him, to be Receiv'd upon the Credit of those Miracles which he is said to have Wrought. And therefore, if he did Work such, it is no Prejudice to the Truth, either of the Law or the Gospel. So that this Whole Parallel betwixt Apollonius and Christ, is altogether Impertinent, and shews at
once

The Preface. xi

once the Impotence as well as Malice of those who Propose it.

2. *This brings me from Apollonius, to his New Editor amongst us, Charles Blount. For I find my self oblig'd to Account for what I have said of him, p. 40. I have been told, (since the First Edition of this) That it has Disoblig'd some Friends (far from my Intention) who for Relation or Acquaintance had a Regard to the Person of Mr. Blount, tho' not to his Principles; and think that I have us'd him too Courſly, he being a Gentleman.*

But when it is Consider'd, how he has Treated our Blessed Lord and Saviour, like the Soldiers who Bow'd the Knee to Him, and Spit in his Face; Who cry'd Hail, King of the Jews! to Mock Him the more Outragiously. That not only in his Comments upon this History of Apollonius, but in his Great Diana, his Oracles of Reason, and in all his

his Works, he set himself, with his whole Might, to Oppose and Ridicule the Birth, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and all that is said of our Christ and God in the Holy Gospel, and all Revealed Religion; of which I Cou'd give Instances out of Number, but they are not fit to be heard by Christian Ears; and it wou'd Gratifie the Deists but to have them Nam'd.

Again Considering, that his most Pernicious Books (many of which were well nigh Lost) are of Late, carefully Collected and Re-printed (to the Scandal of a Christian Country) and Dispersed, to Poison the Nation, I say, all this being duly Considered, I have no Apology to make, for calling this Man Execrable: Nor can I Retract or Compound it. Seeing it is come to this, that either his Blasphemous Works (who set himself at the Head of the Deists, and after whom they now Copy) or else the Gospel

The Preface. xiii

*spel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, must
Remain Execrable!*

*Nor would I give better Quarter to
the Greatest King upon Earth, who shou'd
do the Same: But, after the Example
of our Holy Apostle, I would say, I Do
say, Let Him, or an Angel from Hea-
ven, who durst thus Presume be Ac-
cursed.*

*If Mr. Blount had Medl'd only with
the Argument, And Oppos'd what he
cou'd, in that Method; I wou'd have
thought him worthy of Civil Treatment;
as I will any other of the Deists, who
shall Answer the Reasons I have here
set down. And if he can Overthrow
them, and give me Better on his Side, I
Confess I shall then be Tempted to Turn
Infidel with him. And to this I Invite
them, I Provoke them. But if they will
not (as ther is little Appearance that
they will) then, let them never more va-
lue Themselves as Men of Sense, at
Least,*

Least, Let None Others do so, while they Refuse to be Determin'd by Reason.

But if instead of Reason, they have Recourse, like Mr. Blount, to their Old Topick of Buffoonry, and shew their Parts in witty Satyr and Scorn, and Laugh out — Priest-Craft — for an Hour together; Let them Enjoy the Fruit of their Labours, and what they Justly Deserve, to be the Admiration of Fools, and Contempt of all Wise and Good Men. And so I Leave them.

Just Published.

A Short and Easie Method with the **Jews**, shewing, that these **FOUR RULES** do oblige them as much or more than the **Deists**, to the Acknowledgement of *Christ*. With an Answer to the most material of their Objections, and Prejudices against *Christianity*. By the same Author. *The second Edition, corrected.*



A Short

A Short and Easie

METHOD

WITH THE

DEISTS.

S I R,

I. **I**N answer to yours of the Third Instant, I much condole with you your unhappy Circumstances, of being placed amongst such Company, where, as you say, you continually hear the Sacred *Scriptures*, and the Histories therein contain'd, particularly of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, and all *Revealed* Religion turn'd into Ridicule, by Men who set up for *Sense* and *Reason*. And they say, That there is no greater Ground to believe in *Christ*, than in *Mahomet*; that all these Pretences to *Revelation* are *Cheats*, and ever have been among *Pagans*, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Christians*; That they

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are all alike Impositions of *Cunning* and *Designing Men*, upon the *Credulity*, at first, of *simple* and *unthinking* People, till, their numbers encreasing, their *Delusions* grew popular, came at last to be establish'd by *Laws*; and then the Force of *Education* and *Custom* gives a Byass to the Judgments of after Ages, till such *Deceits* come really to be believ'd, being receiv'd upon *Trust* from the Ages foregoing, without examining into the *Original* and *Bottom* of them. Which these our modern Men of *Sense*, (as they desire to be esteem'd) say, That they only do, that they only have their *Judgments* freed from the slavish Authority of *Precedents* and *Laws*, in Matters of *Truth*, which, they say, ought only to be decided by *Reason*; tho' by a prudent Compliance with *Popularity* and *Laws*, they preserve themselves from *Outrage*, and Legal *Penalties*; for none of their Complexion are addicted to *Sufferings*, or *Martyrdom*.

Now, Sir, that which you desire from me, is, some short Topic of *Reason*, if such can be found, whereby, without running to *Authorities*, and the intricate Mazes of *Learning*, which breed long Disputes, and which these Men of *Reason* deny by wholesale, though they can give no *Reason* for it, only suppose that *Authors* have been Trump'd upon us, *Interpolated*, and *Corrupted*, so that no stress can be laid upon them, tho' it cannot be shewn wherein they are so *Corrupted*; which, in *Reason*, ought to lie upon them

them to prove, who alledge it; otherwise it is not only a *Precarious*, but a *Guilty Plea*: And the more, that they refrain not to quote Books on their side, for whose Authority there are no better, or not so good Grounds. However, you say, it makes your Disputes endless, and they go away with Noise and Clamour, and a Boast, That there is nothing, at least nothing *Certain*, to be said on the *Christian* side. Therefore you are desirous to find some *One Topic of Reason*, which should demonstrate the Truth of the *Christian* Religion, and at the same time, distinguish it from the *Impostures* of *Mahomet*, and the *Old Pagan* World: That our *Deists* may be brought to this *Test*, and be either oblig'd to renounce their *Reason*, and the common *Reason* of *Mankind*, or to submit to the clear Proof, from *Reason*, of the *Christian* Religion; which must be such a *Proof*, as no *Imposture* can pretend to, otherwise it cannot prove the *Christian* Religion not to be an *Imposture*. And, whether such a *Proof*, one single Proof, (to avoid Confusion) is not to be found out, you desire to know from me.

And you say, that you cannot imagine but there must be such a *Proof*, because every *Truth* is in it self *Clear*, and *One*; and therefore that *One Reason* for it, if it be the true *Reason*, must be sufficient; and, if *sufficient*, it is better than *many*; for *multi-*

plicity confounds, especially to weak Judgments.

Sir, you have impos'd an hard Task upon me, I wish I could perform it. For tho' *every Truth* is *One*, yet our *Sight* is so feeble, that we cannot (always) come to it *directly*, but by many *Inferences*, and laying of things together.

But I think, that in the Case before us, there is such a *Proof* as you require, and I will set it down as *Short* and *Plain* as I can.

II. First then, I suppose, that the *Truth* of the *Doctrine* of CHRIST will be sufficiently evinced, if the *Matters of Fact*, which are recorded of him in the *Gospels* be *True*; for his *Miracles*, if *True*, do vouch the *Truth* of what he delivered.

The same is to be said as to *Moses*. If he brought the Children of *Israel* through the *Red-Sea*, in that *miraculous* manner, which is related in *Exodus*, and did such other wonderful things as are there told of him, it must necessarily follow, that he was sent from GOD: These being the strongest Proofs we can desire, and which every *Deist* will confess he wou'd acquiesce in, if he saw them with his Eyes. Therefore the Stress of this Cause will depend upon the Proof of these *Matters of Fact*.

I. And the Method I will take, is, *First*, To lay down such *Rules*, as to the *Truth* of *Matters of Fact*, in General, that where they

All

All meet, such *Matters of Fact* cannot be false. And then, *Secondly*, To shew that all these *Rules* do meet in the *Matters of Fact*, of *Moses*, and of *Christ*; and that they do not meet in the *Matters of Fact* of *Mabomet*, of the *Heathen Deities*, or can possibly meet in any *Imposture* whatsoever.

2 The *Rules* are these, 1st. That the *Matters of Fact* be such, as that *opens outward Senses*, their *Eyes* and *Ears*, may be *Judges* of it. 2. That it be done *Publickly*, in the *Face* of the *World*. 3. That not only *publick Monuments* be kept up in *memory* of it, but some *outward Actions* to be perform'd. 4. That such *Monuments* and such *Actions* or *Observances* be *Instituted*, and do commence from the *Time* that the *Matter of Fact* was done.

3. The *Two* first *Rules* make it impossible for any such *Matter of Fact* to be impos'd upon *Men*, at the *Time* when such *Matter of Fact* was said to be done, because every *Man's Eyes* and *Senses* would contradict it. For Example, Suppose any *Man* shou'd pretend, that Yesterday he divided the *Thames*, in presence of all the *People* of *London*, and carried the whole *City*, *Men*, *Women*, and *Children*, over to *Southwark*, on dry *Land*, the *Waters* standing like *Walls* on both sides: I say, it is morally impossible that he could persuade the *People* of *London*, that this was true, when every *Man*, *Woman*, and *Child* could contradict him, and say, That this

was a notorious Falshood, for that they had not seen the *Thames* so divided, or had gone over on dry Land. Therefore I take it for Granted, (and, I suppose, with the allowance of all the *Deists* in the World) that no such Imposition could be put upon Men, at the *Time* when such *publick Matter of Fact* was said to be done.

4. Therefore it only remains that such *Matter of Fact* might be invented some time after, when the Men of that Generation, wherein the Thing was said to be done, are all past and gone; and the Credulity of after Ages might be impos'd upon, to believe that Things were done in former Ages, which were not.

And for this, the *Two* last *Rules* secure us as much as the *Two* first *Rules*, in the former Case; for whenever such a *Matter of Fact* came to to be invented, if not only *Monuments* were said to remain of it, but likewise that publick *Actions* and *Observances* were constantly us'd ever since the *Matter of Fact* was said to be done, the Deceit must be detected, by no such *Monuments* appearing, and by the Experience of every *Man*, *Woman*, and *Child*, who must know that no such *Actions*, or *Observances* were ever us'd by them. For Example, Suppose I should now invent a Story of such a Thing, done a Thousand Years ago, I might, perhaps, get some to believe it; but if I say, that not only such a Thing was done, but that from
that

that Day to this, every Man, at the Age of *Twelve Years*, had a *Joint* of his little *Finger* cut off; and that every Man in the Nation did want a *Joint* of such a *Finger*; and that this *Institution* was said to be part of the *Matter of Fact* done so many Years ago, and vouch'd as a *Proof* and *Confirmation* of it, and as having descended, without Interruption, and been constantly practis'd, in memory of such *Matter of Fact*, all along, from the Time that such *Matter of Fact* was done: I say, it is impossible I should be believ'd in such a Case, because every one could contradict me, as to the *Mark* of cutting off a *Joint* of the *Finger*; and that being part of my original *Matter of Fact*, must demonstrate the whole to be false.

III. Let us now come to the *Second Point*, to shew, that the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, have all these *Rules*, or *Marks* before mention'd; and that neither the *Matters of Fact* of *Mahomet*, or what is reported of the *Heathen-Deities*, have the like; and that no *Impostor* can have them all.

I. As to *Moses*, I suppose it will be allow'd me, That he could not have perswaded 600000 Men, that he had brought them out of *Ægypt*, thro' the *Red-Sea*; fed them 40 Years, without *Bread*, by miraculous *Manna*, and the other *Matters of Fact* recorded in his Books, if they had not been true. Because every Man's *Senses* that were then alive, must have

contradicted it. And therefore he must have impos'd upon all their *Senses*, if he could have made them believe it, when it was *false*, and no such Things done. So that here are the *First* and *Second* of the above-mentioned *Four Marks*.

For the same Reason, it was equally impossible for him to have made them receive his *Five Books*, as truth, and not to have rejected them, as a manifest *Imposture*; which told of all these Things as done before their *Eyes*, if they had not been so done. See how positively he speaks to them, *Deut. xi. 2. to Ver. 8. And know you this day, for I speak not with your Children, which have not known, and which have not seen the Chastisement of the Lord your God, his Greatness, his mighty Hand, and his stretched-out Arm, and his Miracles, and his Acts, which he did in the midst of Ægypt, unto Pharaoh, the King of Ægypt, and unto all his Land, and what he did unto the Army of Ægypt, unto their Horses, and to their Chariots; how he made the water of the Red-Sea to overflow them as they pursued after you; and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day: And what he did unto you in the Wilderness, untill ye came into this Place; and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the Sons of Eliab, the Son of Reuben, how the Earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their Households, and their Tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel. But your Eyes have seen all the great Acts of the Lord, which he did, &c.*

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From hence we must suppose it impossible that these Books of *Moses*, (if an Imposture) could have been invented and put upon the People who were then alive, when all these things were said to be done.

The utmost therefore that even a *Suppose* can stretch to, is, That these Books were wrote in some Age after *Moses*, and put out in his Name.

And to this, I say, That if it was so, it was impossible that those Books should have been receiv'd, as the Books of *Moses*, in that Age wherein they may have been suppos'd to have been first invented. Why? Because they speak of themselves as deliver'd by *Moses*, and kept in the *Ark* from his time. *And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this Law in a Book, until they were finished; that Moses commanded the Levites who bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this Book of the Law, and put it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee, Deut. xxxi. 24, 25, 26.* And there was a Copy of this Book to be left likewise with the King. *And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the Throne of his Kingdom, that he shall write him a Copy of this Law in a Book, out of that which is before the Priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his Life: That he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this Law and these Statutes to do them, Deut. xvii 18, 19.*

Here

Here you see that this *Book* of the *Law*, speaks of it self, not only as an *History* or *Relation* of what things were then done : But as the *standing* and *municipal Law* and *Statutes* of the *Nation* of the *Jews*, binding the *King* as well as the *People*.

Now, in whatever Age after *Moses* you will suppose this *Book* to have been *Forged*, it was impossible it cou'd be received as Truth ; because it was not then to be found, either in the *Ark*, or with the *King*, or any where else : For when first *Invented*, every body must know, that they had never heard of it before.

And therefore they cou'd less believe it to be the *Book* of their *Statutes*, and the *standing Law* of the *Land*, which they had all along received, and by which they had been *Governed*.

Cou'd any Man, now at this Day, invent a *Book* of *Statutes* or *Acts of Parliament* for *England*, and make it pass upon the Nation as the only *Book* of *Statutes* that ever they had known ? As impossible was it for the *Books* of *Moses* (if they were invented in any Age after *Moses*) to have been receiv'd for what they declare themselves to be, viz. The *Statutes* and *Municipal Law* of the Nation of the *Jews* : And to have persuaded the *Jews*, that they had *Own'd* and *Acknowledg'd* these *Books*, all along from the Days of *Moses*, to that Day in which they were first invented, that is, that they had *Own'd* them before

fore they had ever so much as *Heard* of them. Nay, more, the whole Nation must, in an Instant, forget their former *Laws* and *Government*, if they cou'd receive these *Books*, as being their *Former* *Laws*. And they cou'd not otherwise receive them, because they vouch'd themselves so to be. Let me ask the *Deists* but this One short Question, Was there ever a *Book* of *Sham-Laws*, which were not the *Laws* of the *Nation*, *Pam'd* upon any *People*, since the World began? If not, With what Face can they say this of the *Book* of *Laws* of the *Jews*? Why will they say that of them, which they confess impossible in any *Nation*, or among any *People*?

But they must be yet more Unreasonable. For the Books of *Moses* have a further Demonstration of their Truth, than even other *Law-Books* have: For they not only contain the *Laws*, but give an *Historical* Account of their *Institution*, and the *Practice* of them from that Time: As of the *Passover* in Memory of the *Death* of the *First-Born* in *Egypt*: And that the same *Num. viii.* Day, all the *First-born* of *Israel* 17, 18. both of Man and *Beast*, were by a perpetual *Law*, dedicated to God: And the *Levites* taken for all the *First-Born* of the Children of *Israel*. That *Aaron's Rod* which budded, was kept in the *Ark*, in Memory of the *Rebellion*, and wonderful *Destruction* of *Korab*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*; and for the Confirmation of the *Priesthood* to the *Tribe* of *Levi*. As likewise
the

the *Pot of Manna*, in Memory of their having been fed with it 40 Years in the Wilderness. That the *Brazen Serpent* was kept (which remained to the Days of *Hezekiah*. 2 *Kin.* xviii. 4.) in Memory of that wonderful Deliverance, by only *Looking* upon it, from the *Biting* of the *Fierj-Serpents*. Num. xxi. 9. The Feast of *Pentecost*, in Memory of the dreadful *Appearance* of *God* upon *Mount Horeb*, &c.

And besides, these *Remembrances* of particular *Actions* and *Occurrences*, there were other solemn *Institutions* in Memory of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, in the *General*, which included all the *Particulars*. As of the *Sabbath*. *Deut.* 5. 15. Their *daily Sacrifices*, and *yearly Expiation*; their *New-Moons*, and several *Feasts* and *Fasts*. So that there were *Yearly*, *Monthly*, *Weekly*, *Daily Remembrances*, and *Recognitions* of these things.

And, not only so, but the *Books* of the same *Moses* tell us, that a particular *Tribe* (of *Levi*) was *Appointed* and *Consecrated* by *God*, as his *Priests*; by whose *Hands* and none other, the *Sacrifices* of the *People* were to be offer'd, and these solemn *Institutions* to be celebrated. That it was *Death* for any other to approach the *Altar*. That their *Higb-Priest* wore a *Glorious Mitre*, and magnificent *Robes* of *God's* own *Contrivance*, with the miraculous *Urim* and *Tbummim* in his *Breast-plate*, whence the *divine Responses* were given.

Numbers
xxvii. 21.

That at his *Word*, the *King*, and all the *People* were to go out, and to come in. That these

these *Levites* were likewise the
Chief-Judges, even in all *Civil* *Deut* xvii.
Causes, and that it was *Death* 8. to 13.
 to resist their *Sentence*. Now *1 Cbr.* xxiii.
 whenever it can be suppos'd 4.
 that these *Books of Moses* were
 forged, in some Ages after *Moses*, it is impos-
 sible they cou'd have been received as *True*,
 unless the *Forgers* could have made the whole
Nation believe, that they had received these
Books from their *Fathers*, had been instructed
 in them when they were *Children*, and had
 taught them to their *Children*, moreover, that
 they had all been circumcised, and did cir-
 cumcise their *Children*, in pursuance to what
 was commanded in these *Books*, that they
 had observed the yearly *Passover*, the weekly
Sabboth the *New-Moons*, and all these sever-
 al *Feasts*, *Fasts*, and *Ceremonies* commanded
 in these *Books*: That they had never eaten
 any *Swines* *Flesh*, or other *Meats* prohibited
 in these *Books*: That they had a magnificent
Tabernacle, with a visible *Priesthood* to *Admini-*
ster in it, which was confined to the *Tribe* of
Levi; over whom was placed a glorious *Higb-*
Priest, cloath'd with great and mighty *Prero-*
gatives; whose *Death* only cou'd deliver those
 that were fled to the *Cities* of
Refuge. And that these *Priests* *Num.* xxxv.
 were their ordinary *Judges*, e- 25. 28.
 ven in *Civil* *Matters*: I say, was
 it possible to have persuaded a whole *Nation*
 of Men, that they had *Known* and *Practis'd* all
 these

these Things, if they had not done it? or, *Secondly*. To have received a *Book* for Truth, which said they had *practised* them, and appeal'd to that *Practice*? So that here are the *Third* and *Fourth* of the *Marks* above-mentioned.

But now let us descend to the utmost Degree of *Supposition*, viz. That these Things were *Practised*, before these *Books* of *Moses* were *Forged*; and that these *Books* did only *impose* upon the *Nation*, in making them believe, That they had kept these *Observances* in Memory of such and such Things, as were inserted in those *Books*.

Well then, let us proceed upon this *Supposition*, (however groundless) and now, will not the same *Impossibilities* occur, as in the former Case? For, *First*, This must suppose that the *Jews* kept all these *Observances* in Memory of *Nothing*, or without knowing any thing of their *Original*, or the *Reason* why they kept them. Whereas these very *Observances* did express the *Ground* and *Reason* of their being kept, as the *Passover*, in Memory of God's *Passing-over* the *Children* of the *Israelites*, in that Night wherein he slew all the *First-born* of *Egypt*, and so of the Rest.

But, *Secondly*, Let us suppose, contrary both to *Reason*, and *Matter of Fact*, That the *Jews* did not know any *Reason* at all why they kept these *Observances*; yet was it possible to put it upon them, That they had kept these

these *Observances* in *Memory* of what they had never heard of before that Day, whensoever you will suppose that these *Books* of *Moses* were first *Forged*? For Example, suppose I shou'd now forge some *Romantick* Story, of strange Things done 1000 Years ago, and in Confirmation of this, should endeavour to persuade the *Christian* World, That they had all along, from that Day to this, kept the *First-Day* of the *Week* in *Memory* of such an *Hero*, an *Appollonius*, a *Barcosbas*, or a *Mahomet*; and had all been *Baptiz'd* in his Name; and *Swore* by his Name, and upon that very *Book*, (which I had then *forged*, and which they never saw before) in their publick *Judicatures*; that this *Book* was their *Gospel* and *Law*, which they had ever since that Time, these 1000 Years past, *universally* receiv'd and own'd, and none other. I would ask any *Deist*, whether he thinks it *possible*, that such a *Cheat* cou'd pass, or such a *Legend* be receiv'd as the *Gospel* of *Christians*; and that they could be made believe, that they never had had any other *Gospel*? The same Reason is as to the *Books* of *Moses*; and must be, as to every *Matter of Fact*, which has all the Four *Marks* before-mentioned; and these *Marks* secure any such *Matter of Fact* as much from being *Invented* and *impos'd* in any after *Ages*, as at the Time when such *Matters of Fact* were said to be done.

Let me give one very familiar Example
more

more in this Case. There is the *Stonhenge* in *Salisbury-Plain*, every body knows it; and yet none knows the Reason why those Great *Stones* were set there, or by whom, or in memory of what.

Now suppose I shou'd write a Book to morrow, and tell there, That these *Stones* were set up by *Hercules*, *Polyphemus*, or *Garagantua*, in memory of such and such of their Actions. And for a further Confirmation of this, shou'd say, in this *Book*, That it was wrote at the *Time* when such Actions were done, and by the very *Actors* themselves, or *Eye-Witnesses*. And that this *Book* had been received as *Truth*, and quoted by *Authors* of the greatest *Reputation* in all *Ages* since. Moreover that this *Book* was well known in *England*, and enjoyn'd by *Act of Parliament* to be taught our *Children*, and that we did teach it to our *Children*, and had been taught it our selves when we were *Children*. I ask any *Deist*, Whether he thinks this could pass upon *England*? And whether, if I, or any other should insist upon it, we should not, instead of being believ'd, be sent to *Bedlam*?

Now let us compare this with the *Stonhenge*, as I may call it, or *Twelve* great *Stones* set up at *Gilgal*, which is told in the iv. *Chap* of *Joshua*. There it is said, *Ver. 6.* that the Reason why they were set up, was, that when their *Children*, in after Ages, should ask the Meaning of it, it should be told them.

And the Thing in Memory of which they
were

were set up, was such as cou'd not possibly be impos'd upon that *Nation*, at that Time, when it was said to be done, it was as wonderful and miraculous as their Passage thro' the *Red-Sea*.

And withal, free from a very poor Objection, which the *Deists* have advanc'd against that Miracle of the *Red-Sea*: Thinking to salve it by a *Spring-Tide*, with the Concurrence of a *strong Wind*, happening at the same Time; which left the *Sand* so dry, as that the *Israelites* being all *Foot*, might pass thro' the *Ousey* Places and *Holes*, which it must be supposed the *Sea* left behind it: But that the *Egyptians*, being all *Horse* and *Chariots*, stuck in those *Holes*, and were entangl'd, so as that they cou'd not March so fast as the *Israelites*: And that this was all the Meaning of its being said, That God took off their (the *Egyptians*) Chariot-Wheels, that they drove them heavily. So that they wou'd make nothing extraordinary, at least, not *Miraculous*, in all this Action.

This is advanc'd in *Le Clerks Dissertations upon Genesis*, lately Printed in *Holland*, and that Part with others of the like Tendency, endeavouring to resolve other *Miracles*, as that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, &c. into the mere *Natural Causes*, are put into *English* by the well known *T. Brown*, for the *Edification* of the *Deists* in *England*.

But these Gentlemen have forgot, that the *Israelites* had great *Herd*s of many Thousand

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Cattle

Cattle with them ; which wou'd be apter to *stray*, and fall into those *Holes*, and *Owsey* Places in the *Strand*, than *Horses* with *Riders*, who might direct them.

But such *precarious*, and *silly* *Supposes* are not worth the Answering. If there had been no more in this *Passage* thro' the *Red-Sea* then that of a *Spring-Tide*, &c. It had been impossible for *Moses* to have made the *Israelites* believe that Relation given of it in *Exodus*, with so many Particulars, which Themselves saw, to be true.

And all those *Scriptures* which magnify this Action, and appeal to it as a full Demonstration of the miraculous Power of God ; must be reputed as *Romance* or *Legend*.

I say this, for the Sake of some Christians, who think it no Prejudice to the Truth of the *Holy Bible*, but rather an Advantage, as rendring it more easy to be believ'd, if they can solve whatever seems *Miraculous* in it, by the Power of *second Causes* : And so to make all, as they speak, *Natural* and *Easie*. Wherein, if they cou'd prevail, the *natural* and *easie* Result wou'd be, not to believe one Word in all those *Sacred-Oracles*. For if things be not, as they are told in any *Relation*, that *Relation* must be *false*. And if *false* in *Part*, we cannot *Trust* to it, either in *Whole*, or in *Part*.

Here are to be excepted, *Mis-Translations*, and *Errors*, either in *Copy*, or in *Press*. But where there is no Room for supposing of these, as were all *Copies* do agree ; there must
either

either *Receive* all, or *Reject* all. I mean in any Book that pretends to be written from the *Mouth* of God. For in other common *Histories*, we may *believe* Part, and *reject* Part, as we see Cause.

But to return. The *Passage* of the *Israelites* over *Jordan*, in Memory of which those *Stones* at *Gilgal* were set up, is free from all those little *Carpings* before-mentioned, that are made as to the *Passage* thro' the *Red-Sea*. For Notice was given to the *Israelites* the Day before, of this great *Miracle* to be done. *Josh.* iii. 5. It was done at Noon-day, before the whole *Nation*. And when the *Waters* of *Jordan* were divided, it was not at any *Low-Ebb*, but at the Time when that River over flowed all his Banks. ver. 15. And it was done, not by *Winds*, or in length of Time, which *Winds* must take to do it: But all on the suddain, as soon as the Feet of the *Priests* that bare the *Ark* were dipped in the Brim of the Water, Then the *Waters* which came down from above, stood and rose up upon an Heap, very far from the City *Adam*, that is beside *Zaretan*: And those that came down toward the Sea of the Plain, even the *Salt-Sea*, failed, and were cut off: And the People passed over, right against *Jericho*. The *Priests* stood in the midst of *Jordan*, 'till all the *Armies* of *Israel* had passed over. And it came to pass, when the *Priests* that bare the *Ark* of the *Covenant* of the Lord, were come up, out of the *Midst* of *Jordan*, and the Soles of the *Priests* Feet were lift up upon the *Dry-land*, that the *Waters*

of Jordan returned unto their Place, and flowed over all his Banks as they did before. And the People came up out of Jordan, on the Tenth Day of the first Month, and encamped in Gilgal on the East Border of Jericho, And those Twelve Stones which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he speak unto the Children of Israel, saying, When your Children shall ask their Fathers in Time to come, saying, what mean these Stones? Then shall ye let your Children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry Land. For the Lord your God dryed up the Waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over; as the Lord your God did to the Red-Sea, which He dryed up, from before us, until we were gone over. That all the People of the Earth might know the Hand of the Lord, that it is Mighty: That ye might fear the Lord your God for ever. Chap. iv. from ver. 18.

If the Passage over the Red-Sea, had been only taking Advantage of a Spring-Tide, or the like, How wou'd this teach all the People of the Earth, that the Hand of the Lord was Mighty! How wou'd a Thing, no more remarkable, have been taken Notice of thro' all the World! How wou'd it have taught Israel to fear the Lord, when they must know, that notwithstanding, of all these Big-Words, there was so Little in it! How cou'd they have believ'd, or receiv'd a Book, as Truth, which they knew, told the Matter so far otherwise from what it was!

But, as I said, this Passage over Jordan, which is here compar'd to that of the Red-Sea,
is

is free from all those *Cavils* that are made, as to that of the *Red-Sea*, and is a further Attestation to it, being said to be done in the same Manner as was that of the *Red-Sea*.

Now, to form our Argument, let Us suppose, that there never was any such Thing as that *Passage* over *Jordan*. That these *Stones* at *Gilgal* were set up, upon some other Occasion, in some after Age. And then, that some designing Man invented this Book of *Joshua*, and said, that it was wrote by *Joshua* at that Time. And gave this *Stonage* at *Gilgal*, for a *Testimony* of the *Truth* of it. Wou'd not every Body say to him, We know the *Stonage* at *Gilgal*: But we never heard before of this Reason for it? Nor of this *Book* of *Joshua*? Where has it been all this while? And *Where*, and *How* came you, after so many Ages to find it? Besides, this Book tells Us, that this *Passage* over *Jordan* was ordain'd to be taught our *Children*, from Age to Age: And therefore, that they were always to be *Instructed* in the Meaning of that *Stonage* at *Gilgal*, as a *Memorial* of it. But we were never taught it, when we were *Children*; nor did ever teach our *Children* any such Thing. And it is not likely, That cou'd have been forgotten, while so remarkable a *Stonage* did continue, which was set up for that, and no other End!

And if, for the Reasons before given, no such *Imposition* cou'd be put upon Us, as to

the *Stonage* in *Salisbury-Plain*; How much less cou'd it be as to the *Stonage* at *Gilgal*?

And if where we know not the *Reason* of a bare naked *Monument*, such a *Sham-Reason* cannot be impos'd; How much more is it impossible to impose upon *Us*, in *Actions* and *Observances*, which we *celebrate* in Memory of particular *Passages*? How impossible to make *Us* forget those *Passages* which we daily *Commemorate*; and persuade *Us*, that we had always kept such *Institutions* in Memory of what we never heard of before; that is, that We knew it, before We knew it!

And if we find it thus impossible for an *Imposition* to be put upon *Us*, even in some Things, which we have not all the *Four-Marks* before-mentioned: How much more impossible is it, that any *Deceit* shou'd be in that Thing, where all the *Four-Marks* do meet!

This has been shew'd in the *First* Place, as to the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*.

2. Therefore I come now (*Secondly*) to shew, that, as in the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*, so likewise, all these *Four Marks* do meet in the *Matters of Fact*, which are recorded in the *Gospel*, of Our B. *Saviour*. And my Work herein will be the shorter, because all that is said before, of *Moses* and his Books, is every Way as applicable to *Christ* and His *Gospel*. His *Works*, and *Miracles* are there said to be done *publickly*, in the Face of the World, as He argu'd to his Accusers, *I spake openly to the World, and in Secret have I said Nothing*, Joh
xviii.

xviii. 20. It is told, *Act.* ii. 41. that Three thousand at one Time; and, *Act.* iv. 4. that above Five thousand at another Time, were converted, upon Conviction of what themselves had seen, what had been done publickly before their Eyes, wherein it was impossible to have imposed upon them. Therefore here were the two First of the *Rules* before-mention'd.

Then for the Two second: *Baptism* and *the Lord's Supper* were instituted as perpetual *Memorials* of these Things; and they were not instituted in after-Ages, but at the very Time when these Things were said to be done; and have been observed without Interruption, in all Ages through the whole Christian World, down all the Way from that Time to this. And *Christ* Himself did ordain *Apostles*, and other *Ministers* of His Gospel, to *Preach*, and *Administer* these *Sacraments*; and to *Govern* His Church:

And that *always, even unto the End* *Matth.* of the *World*. Accordingly they xviii. 20. have continu'd by regular *Succession*, to this Day: And, no Doubt, ever shall, while the Earth shall last. So that the Christian *Clergy* are as notorious a *Matter of Fact*, as the *Tribe of Levi* among the *Jews*. And the Gospel is as much a *Law* to the *Christians*, as the *Book of Moses* to the *Jews*: And it being Part of the *Matters of Fact* related in the Gospel, that such an *Order of Men*, were appointed by *Christ*, and to *continue to the End*

of the World ; consequently, if the *Gospel* was a *Faction*, and invented (as it must be) in some Ages after *Christ* ; then, at that Time, when it was first invented, there cou'd be no such Order of *Clergy*, as deriv'd themselves from the Institution of *Christ* ; which must give the *Lye* to the *Gospel*, and demonstrate the whole to be *False*. And the *Matters of Fact* of *Christ* being press'd to be True, no otherwise than as there was, at that Time (whenever the *Deists* will suppose the *Gospel* to be *Forged*) not only publick *Sacraments* of *Christ*'s Institution, but an Order of *Clergy*, likewise of his Appointment to *Administer* them : And it being impossible there cou'd be any such Things before they were *Invented*, it is as impossible that they should be *Received* when *Invented*. And therefore, by what was said above, it was as impossible to have impos'd upon Mankind in this Matter, by inventing of it in after-Ages, as at the Time when those Things were said to be done.

3. The *Matters of Fact* of *Mahomet*, or what is Fabled of the *Deities*, do all want some of the aforesaid four Rules, whereby the Certainty of *Matters of Fact* is demonstrated. First, for *Mahomet*, he pretended to no *Miracles*, as he tells us in his *Alcoran*. c. 6. &c. and those which are commonly told of him pass among the *Mahometans* themselves, but as *Legendary Fables* ; and, as such are rejected by the *Wise*, and *Learned* among them ; as the
Legends

Legends of their *Saints* are in the *Church* of *Rome*. See Dr. *Prideaux* his *Life of Mahomet*, Page 34.

But, in the next Place, those which are told of him, do all want the Two first *Rules* before-mention'd. For his pretended *Converse* with the *Moon*; his *Merfa*, or *Night-Journey* from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem*, and thence to *Heaven*, &c. were not performed before any *Body*. We have only his own *Word* for them. And they are as groundless as the *Delusions* of the *Fox*, or *Muggleton* among our selves. The same is to be said (in the second Place) of the *Fables* of the *Heathen Gods*, of *Mercury's* stealing *Sheep*, *Jupiter's* turning himself into a *Bull*, and the like; besides the *Folly* and *Unworthyness* of such *sensless* pretended *Miracles*. And moreover, the *Wise* among the *Heathen* did reckon no otherwise of these but as *Fables*, which had a *Mythology*, or *Mythical* meaning in them, of which several of them have given us the *Rationale*, or *Explication*. And it is plain enough that *Ovid* meant no other by all his *Metamorphoses*.

It is true, the *Heathen Deities* had their *Priests*: They had likewise *Feasts*, *Games*, and other *publick Institutions* in Memory of them. But all these want the Fourth *Mark*, viz. That such *Priest-hood* and *Institutions* shou'd *Commence* from the Time that such Things as they *Commemorat*, were said to be done; otherwise they cannot secure after Ages from the *Imposure*, by detecting it, at
the

the Time when first *Invented*, as hath been argu'd before. But the *Bacchanalia*, and other *Heathen Feasts* were instituted many Ages after what was reported of these Gods was said to be done, and therefore can be no *Proof* of them. And the *Priests* of *Bacchus*, *Apollo*, &c. were not *Ordain'd* by these supposed Gods: But were appointed by others, in after Ages, only in *Honour* to them. And therefore these *Orders* of *Priests* are no Evidence to the Truth of the *Matters of Fact*, which are reported of their *Gods*.

IV. Now to apply what has been said, You may challenge all the *Deists* in the World to shew any Action that is *Fabulous*, which has all the four *Rules*, or *Marks* before-mention'd. No, it is impossible. And (to resume a little what is spoke to before) the Histories of *Exodus*, and the *Gospel* cou'd never have been receiv'd, if they had not been true; because the Institution of the Priesthood of *Levi*, and of *Christ*; Of the *Sabbath*, the *Pass-over*, of *Circumcision*, of *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, &c. Are there related, as descending all the Way down from those Times, without Interruption. And it is full as impossible to persuade Men, that they had been *Circumcis'd*, *Baptiz'd*, had *Circumcis'd*, or *Baptis'd* their *Children*, celebrated *Pass-overs*, *Sabbaths*, *Sacraments*, &c. under the *Government*, and *Administration* of a certain Order of *Priests*, if they had done none of these Things,

Things, as to make them believe that they had gone through *Seas* upon *Dry-Land*, seen the *Dead* raised, &c. And without believing of these, it was impossible that either the *Law*, or the *Gospel* cou'd have been receiv'd.

And the Truth of the *Matters of Fact* of *Exodus* and the *Gospel*, being no otherwise press'd upon Men, than as they have practis'd such *publick Institutions*; it is appealing to the *Senses* of Mankind for the *Truth* of them: And makes it impossible for any to have invented such Stories in after Ages, without a Palpable Detection of the Cheat, when first invented; as impossible as to have impos'd upon the *Senses* of Mankind, at the Time when such *publick Matters of Fact* were said to be done.

V. I do not say, that every thing which wants these four *Marks* is *False*: But, that nothing can be *False* which has them *All*.

I have manner of Doubt that there was such a Man as *Julius Cæsar*, that he fought at *Pharsalia*, was killed in the *Senate-House*? and many other *Matters of Fact* of Antient times, tho' we keep no *publick Observances* in Memory of them.

But this shews that the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, have come down to Us better guarded than any other *Matters of Fact* how true soever.

And yet our Deists who would laugh any Man out of the World, as an irrational *Brute*,
that

that should offer to deny *Cæsar* or *Alexander*, *Homer* or *Virgil*, their *publick Works* and *Actions*; do, at the same time, value themselves as the only Men of *Wit* and *Sense*, of *Free*, *Generous*, and *Unbiaſt Judgments* for ridiculing the *Histories* of *Moses* and *Chriſt*, that are infinitely better attested, and guarded with infallible Marks, which the others want.

VI. Besides that the Importance of the Subject wou'd oblige all Men to inquire more narrowly into the one than the other: For what Conſequence is it to me, or to the World, whether there was ſuch a Man as *Cæſar*, whether he beat or was beaten at *Pharſalia*, whether *Homer* or *Virgil* wrote ſuch Books, and whether what is related in the *Iliads* or *Æneids* be *True*, or *False*? It is not Two Pence up or down to any Man in the World. And therefore it is worth no Man's while to inquire into it, either to *Oppoſe* or *Juſtify* the *Truth* of theſe Relations

But our very *Soul* and *Bodies*, both this *Life* and *Eternity* are concern'd in the *Truth* of what is related in the *Holy Scriptures*; and therefore Men wou'd be more inquisitive to ſearch into the *Truth* of theſe, than of any other Matters of *Fact*; examine and ſift them narrowly; and find out the *Deceit*, if any ſuch cou'd be found: For it concern'd them *Nearly*: and was of the laſt *Importance* to them.

How unreaſonable then is it to reject theſe *Matters of Fact*, ſo ſifted, ſo examin'd, and ſo
attested

attested as no other *Matters of Fact* in the World ever were ; and yet to think it the most highly *Unreasonable*. even to *Madness*, to deny other *Matters of Fact*, which have not the thousandth Part of their *Evidence*, and are of no *Consequence* at all to Us whether *True* or *False* !

VII. There are several other *Topicks*, from whence the Truth of the *Christian* Religion is evinced to all who will Judge by *Reason*, and give themselves leave to *Consider*. As the *Improbability* that Ten or Twelve poor illiterate *Fisher-Men* should form a Design of converting the whole World to believe their *Delusions* ; and the *Impossibility* of their effecting it, without Force of *Arms*, *Learning*, *Oratory*, or any one visible Thing that could recommend them ! And to impose a *Doctrine* quite opposite to the *Lusts* and *Pleasures* of Men, and all *worldly Advantages*, or *Enjoyments* ! And this in an Age of so great *Learning*, and *Sagacity* as that wherein the *Gospel* was first Preach'd ! That these *Apostles* should not only undergo all the *Scorn* and *Contempt*, but the severest *Persecutions*, and most cruel *Deaths* that could be inflicted, in Attestation to what themselves knew to be a mere *Deceit* and *Forgery* of their own Contriving ! Some have suffer'd for *Errors* which they thought to be *Truth* : But never any for what themselves *knew* to be *Lyes*. And the *Apostles* must know what they taught to

be

be *Lyes*, if it was so, because they spoke of those things which they said, they
Act. iv. 20. had both *seen* and *heard*, had *looked*
1 Job. i. i. upon, and handled with their
Hands, &c.

Neither can it be, that they, perhaps, might have propos'd some temporal Advantages to themselves, but miss'd of them, and met with *Sufferings* instead of them: For, if it had been so, it is more than probable, that when they saw their Disappointment, they would have discover'd their *Conspiracy*; especially when they might not have only sav'd their *Lives*, but got great *Rewards* for doing of it. That not one of them should ever have been brought to do this.

But this is not all. For they tell us that their *Master* bid them expect nothing but *Sufferings* in this World. This is the Tenure of all that *Gospel* which they taught. And they told the same to all whom they *Converted*. So that here was no Disappointment.

For all that were *Converted* by them, were *Converted* upon the certain Expectation of *Sufferings*, and bidden *prepare* for it. *Christ* commanded his *Disciples* to take up their *Cross* daily and follow Him; and told them, that in the World they should have *Tribulation*: That whoever did not forsake *Father*, *Mother*, *Wife*, *Children*, *Lands*, and their very *Lives*, could not be his *Disciples*: That he who *sought* to *save* his *Life* in this World, should *lose* it in the next.

Now

Now that this despised *Doctrine* of the *Cross* should prevail so *Universally* against the *Allurements* of *Flesh* and *Blood*, and all the *Blandishments* of this *World*; against the *Page*, and *Persecution* of all the *Kings* and *Powers* of the *Earth*, must shew it's *Original* to be *Divine*; and its *Protector Almighty*. What is it else, could *Conquer* without *Arms*, *Persuade* without *Rhetorick*; overcome *Enemies*; disarm *Tyrants*; and subdue *Empires* without *Opposition*!

VIII. We may add to all this, the Testimonies of the most bitter *Enemies* and *Persecutors* of *Christianity*, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to the *Truth* of the *Matter of Fact* of *Christ*, such as *Josephus* and *Tacitus*; of which the First flourish'd about *Forty* Years after the *Death* of *Christ*, and the Other about *Seventy* Years after: So that they were capable of examining into the *Truth*, and wanted not *Prejudice* and *Malice* sufficient to have inclin'd them to deny the *Matter of Fact* it self of *Christ*: But their *Confessing* to it, as likewise *Lucian*, *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian* the *Apostate*; the *Mahometans* since, and all other *Enemies* of *Christianity* that have *Arisen* in the *World*, is an undeniable *Attestation* to the *Truth* of the *Matter of Fact*.

IX. But ther is another *Argument* more strong and convincing than even this *Matter of Fact*. More than the *Certainty* of what I see with my *Eyes*. And which the *Apostle*
Peter

be *Lyes*, if it was so, because they spoke of those things which they said, they
Act. iv. 20. had both *seen* and *heard*, had *looked*
1 Job. i. i. upon, and handled with their
Hands, &c.

Neither can it be, that they, perhaps, might have propos'd some temporal Advantages to themselves, but mis'd of them, and met with *Sufferings* instead of them: For, if it had been so, it is more than probable, that when they saw their Disappointment, they would have discover'd their *Conspiracy*; especially when they might not have only sav'd their *Lives*, but got great *Rewards* for doing of it. That not one of them should ever have been brought to do this.

But this is not all. For they tell us that their *Master* bid them expect nothing but *Sufferings* in this World. This is the Tenure of all that *Gospel* which they taught. And they told the same to all whom they *Converted*. So that here was no Disappointment.

For all that were *Converted* by them, were *Converted* upon the certain Expectation of *Sufferings*, and bidden *prepare* for it. *Christ* commanded his *Disciples* to take up their *Cross* daily and follow Him; and told them, that in the World they should have *Tribulation*: That whoever did not forsake *Father*, *Mother*, *Wife*, *Children*, *Lands*, and their very *Lives*, could not be his *Disciples*: That he who *sought* to *save* his *Life* in this World, should *lose* it in the next.

Now

Now that this despised *Doctrine* of the *Cross* should prevail so *Universally* against the *Allurements* of *Flesh* and *Blood*, and all the *Blandishments* of this *World*; against the *Page*, and *Persecution* of all the *Kings* and *Powers* of the *Earth*, must shew it's *Original* to be *Divine*; and its *Protector Almighty*. What is it else, could *Conquer* without *Arms*, *Persuade* without *Rhetorick*; overcome *Enemies*; disarm *Tyrants*; and subdue *Empires* without *Opposition*!

VIII. We may add to all this, the Testimonies of the most bitter *Enemies* and *Persecutors* of *Christianity*, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to the *Truth* of the *Matter of Fact* of *Christ*, such as *Josephus* and *Tacitus*; of which the First flourish'd about *Forty* Years after the *Death* of *Christ*, and the Other about *Seventy* Years after: So that they were capable of examining into the *Truth*, and wanted not *Prejudice* and *Malice* sufficient to have inclin'd them to deny the *Matter of Fact* it self of *Christ*: But their *Confessing* to it, as likewise *Lucian*, *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, and *Jultan* the *Apostate*; the *Mahometans* since, and all other *Enemies* of *Christianity* that have *Arisen* in the *World*, is an undeniable *Attestation* to the *Truth* of the *Matter of Fact*.

IX. But ther is another *Argument* more strong and convincing than even this *Matter of Fact*. More than the *Certainty* of what I see with my *Eyes*. And which the *Apostle*
Peter

Peter call'd a *more sure Word*, that is, *Proof* than what he *saw* and *heard* upon the *Holy Mount*, when our *Blessed Saviour* was *Transfigur'd* before him, and two other of the *Apostles*: For having repeated that Passage as a *Proof* of that whereof they were *Eye-Witnesses*, and *heard* the *Voice* from *Heaven* giving *Attestation* to our *Lord Christ*, 2 Pet. 1. 16. 17, 18. He says, *ver. 19. We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy*, for the *Proof* of this *Jesus* being the *Messiah*, that is the *Prophecies* which had gone before of *Him*, from the *Beginning* of the *World*; and *All* exactly *fulfilled* in *Him*.

Men may dispute an *Imposition* or *Delusion* upon our outward *Senses*. But how that can be *False*, which has been so *long*, even from the *Beginning* of the *World*, and so *Often* by all the *Prophets*, in several *Ages* fore-told; how can this be an *Imposition*, or a *Forgery*?

This is particularly *insisted* on, in the *Method with the Jews*. And even the *Deists* must confess, that that Book We call the *Old Testament*, was in being, in the *Hands* of the *Jews* long before our *Saviour* came into the *World*. And if they will be at the *Pains* to compare the *Prophecies* that are there of the *Messiah*, with the *Fulfilling* of them, as to *Time*, *Place*, and all other *Circumstances*, in the *Person*, *Birth*, *Life*, *Death*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension* of our *Blessed Saviour*, will find this *Proof* what our *Apostle* here calls it, *a Light shining in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your Hearts*. Which
God

God grant. Here is no possibility of *Deceit* or *Imposture*.

Old *Prophecies*, (and all so agreeing) cou'd not have been contrived to countenance a new *Cheat*: And nothing cou'd be a *Cheat*, that cou'd fulfill all these.

For this therefore I refer the *Deists* to the *Method with the Jews*.

I desire them likewise to look there, *Seet*. XI. and consider the *Prophecies* given so long ago, of which they see the Fulfilling at this Day, with their own Eyes, of the State of the *Jews*, for many Ages *past*, and at *present*; without a *King* or *Priest*, or *Temple*, or *Sacrifice*, scattered to the four *Winds*, *Sifted* as with a *Sieve*, among all *Nations*; yet *preserved*, and always so to be, a distinct People from all others of the whole Earth. Whereas those Mighty *Monarchies* which Oppressed the *Jews*, and which Commanded the *World*, in their Turns; and had the greatest Humane Prospect of Perpetuity, were to be extinguished, as they have been, even that their Names should be blotted out from under Heaven.

As likewise, That as Remarkable of our *Blessed Saviour*, concerning the *Preservation* and *Progress* of the *Christian Church*, when in her *Swadling Cloaths*, consisting only of a few poor *Fisher-Men*. Not by the *Sword*, as that of *Mahomet*, but under all the *Persecution* of *Men* and *Hell*; which yet should not prevail against Her.

D

But

But though I offer these, as not to be slighted by the *Deists*, to which they can shew nothing equal in all prophane History ; and in which it is impossible any *Cheat* can lie ; yet I put them not upon the same Foot as the *Prophecies* before mentioned of the *Marks* and *Coming* of the *Messiah*, which have been since the *World* began.

And that General Expectation of the whole Earth, at the Time of His Coming, insisted upon in the *Method* with the *Jews*, Sect. V. is Greatly to be Notic'd.

But, I say, the foregoing *Prophecies* of our *Saviour*, are so strong a *Proof*, as even *Miracles* wou'd not be sufficient to break their Authority.

I mean, if it were possible that a *True Miracle* could be wrought, in contradiction to them. For that would be for *God* to contradict Himself.

But no *Sign*, or *Wonder*, that could possibly be solv'd, should shake this *Evidence*.

It is this that keeps the *Jews* in their Obstinacy. Though they cannot deny the *Matters* of *Fact* done by our *Blessed Saviour*, to be truly *Miracles*, if so done as said Nor can they deny that they were so done, because they have all the *Four Marks* before mentioned. Yet they cannot yield! Why? Because they think that the *Gospel* is in contradiction to the *Law*. Which, if it were, the Consequence would be unavoidable, that *Both* cou'd not be *True*. To solve this, is
the

the Business of the *Method* with the *Jews*. But the *Contradiction* which they suppose, is in their *Comments* that they put upon the *Law*; especially they expect a *Literal* Fulfilling of those *Promises* of the *Restoration* of *Jerusalem*, and outward *Glories* of the *Church*, of which ther is such frequent mention in the *Books* of *Moses*, the *Psalms*, and all the *Prophets*. And many *Christians* do expect the same; and take those *Texts* as *Literally* as the *Jews* do. We do *Believe* and *Pray* for the *Conversion* of the *Jews*. For this End they have been so miracuouſly *Preserv'd*, according to the *Prophecies* so long before of it. And when that Time shall Come, as they are the most *Honourable* and *Ancient* of all the *Nations* on the *Earth*, so will their *Church* Return to be the *Mother Christian Church* as she was at First; And *Rome* must Surrender to *Jerusalem*. Then all *Nations* will Flow thither. And even *Ezekiel's Temple* may be *Literally* Built *There*, in the *Metropolis* of the whole *Earth*; which *Jerusalem* must be, when the *Fullness* of the *Gentiles*, shall meet with the *Conversion* of the *Jews*. For no *Nation* will then contend with the *Jews*, nor *Church* with *Jerusalem* for *Supremacy*. All *Nations* will be ambitious to draw their *Original* from the *Jews*, whose are the *Fathers*, and from whom, as concerning the *Flesh*, *Christ* came.

Then will be fulfill'd that outward *Grandeur* and *Restoration* of the *Jews* and of *Jerusalem*,

rusalem, which they expect, pursuant to the *Prophecies*.

They pretend not that this is limited to any particular *Time* of the *Reign* of the *Messiah*. They are sure it will not be at the beginning; for they expect to go thro' great *Conflicts* and *Tryals* with their *Messiah*, (as the *Christian Church* has done) before his *Final Conquest*, and that they come to *Reign* with him. So that this is no *Obstruction* to their *Embracing of Christianity*. They see the same things fulfill'd in us, which they expect *Themselves*; and we expect the same things they do.

I tell this to the *Deists*, lest they may think that the *Jews* have some stronger *Arguments* than they know of; That they are not persuaded by the *Miracles* of our *Blessed Saviour*, and by the fulfilling of all the *Prophecies* in him, that were made concerning the *Messiah*.

As I said before, I wou'd not plead even *Miracles* against these.

And if this is sufficient to persuade a *Jew*, it is much more so to a *Deist*, who labours not under these *Objections*.

Besides, I wou'd not seem to clash with that (in a sound Sense) reasonable *Caution*, us'd by *Christian Writers*, not to put the *Issue* of the *Truth* wholly upon *Miracles*, without this addition, when not done in *Contradiction* to the *Revelations* already given in the *Holy Scriptures*.

And

And they do it upon this Consideration, That tho' it is impossible to suppose, that God wou'd work a real *Miracle*, in contradiction to what he has already *Reveal'd*: yet, Men may be impos'd upon by *False* and *Seeming Miracles*, and *Pretended Revelations*, (as ther are many Examples, especially in the Church of Rome) and so may be shaken in the *Faith*, if they keep not to the *Holy Scriptures* as their *Rule*.

We are told, 2 *Thess.* II. 9. of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and Lying-wonders. And *Rev.* xiii. 14. xvi. 14. and xix. 20. of the Devil, and False-Prophets working *Miracles*. But the Word, in all these Places, is only *σημεία*, Signs, that is, as it is render'd, *Matth.* xxv. 24. which, tho' sometimes it may be us'd to signifie *Real Miracles*, yet not always, not in these Places. For though every *Miracle* be a *Sign* and a *Wonder*, yet every *Sign*, or *Wonder*, is not a *Miracle*.

X. Here it may be proper to consider a common *Topick* of the *Deists*, who when they are not able to stand out against the Evidence of *Fact*, that such and such *Miracles* have been done: then turn about, and deny such Things to be *Miracles*, at least, That we can never be *Sure* whether any wonderful Thing that is shewn to us, be a *True* or a *False Miracle*.

And the Great Argument they go upon, is this, That a *Miracle* being that which exceeds the *Power of Nature*. We cannot know what *exceeds* it, unless we knew the utmost *Extent* of the *Power of Nature*: And no Man pretends to know that; therefore, that no Man can *certainly* know whether any *Event* be *miraculous*. And, consequently, he may be *cheated* in his Judgment betwixt *True* and *False-Miracles*.

To which I answer, That Men may be so *Cheated*. And ther are many Examples of it.

But that though we may not always *Know* when we are *Cheated*, yet we can *Certainly* tell, in many Cases, when we are *not Cheated*.

For though we do not know the utmost *Extent* of the *Power of Nature*, perhaps, in any *One Thing*: Yet it does not follow, that we know not the *Nature* of any thing, in some *measure*; and that *certainly* too. For Example, though I do not know the utmost *Extent* of the *Power of Fire*, yet I *Certainly* know, That it is the *Nature of Fire* to *burn*. And that when proper *Fewel* is administered to it, it is *Contrary* to the *Nature of Fire* not to *Consume* it. Therefore, if I see *Three Men* taken off the *Street*, in their common wearing *Apparel*, and without any *Preparation*, cast into the midst of a *Burning Fiery Furnace*; and that the *Flame* was so *Fierce*, that it *Burnt up* those Men that
drew

threw them in; and yet that these who were thrown in, shou'd walk up and down in the *Bottom* of the *Furnace*, and I shou'd see a *Fourth* Person with them of *Glorious* Appearance, like the Son of God. And that these Men shou'd come up again out of the *Furnace*, without any harm. or so much as the *Smell* of *Fire* upon themselves, or their *Cloaths*, I cou'd not be deceiv'd in thinking that ther was a Stop put to the *Nature* of *Fire*, as to these Men; and that it had its Effect upon the Men whom it *Burned*, at the same Time.

Again, Tho' I cannot tell how *Wonderful* and *Sudden* an *Increase* of *Corn* might be produc'd by the Concurrence of many *Causes*, as a *Warm Climate*, the *Fertility* of the *Soil*, &c. Yet this I can *Certainly* know, That ther is not that *Natural Force* in the *Breath* of two or three *Words*, spoken to multiply one small *Loaf* of *Bread*, so fast, in the *Breaking* of it, as *Truly* and *Really*, not only in *Appearance* and *Shew* to the *Eye*, but to fill the *Bellies* of several *Thousand* hungry *Persons*; and that the *Fragments* shou'd be much more than the *Bread* was at first

So neither in a *Word* spoken, to raise the *Dead*, cure *Diseases*, &c

Therefore, though we know not the utmost *Extent* of the *Power* of *Nature*; yet we can certainly know what is *Contrary* to the *Nature* of several such Things as we do Know.

And therefore, though we may be *Cheated* and impos'd upon in many *Seeming-Miracles* and *Wonders*; yet ther are some Things, wherein we may be *Certain*.

But further, the *Deists* acknowledge a *God*, of an *Almighty Power*, who made all Things.

Yet they wou'd put it out of his *Power*, to make any Revelation of his Will to Mankind. For if we cannot be *Certain* of any *Miracle*, How shou'd we know when *God* sent any thing *Extraordinary* to us?

Nay, How shou'd we know the *Ordinary Power* of *Nature*, if we knew not what *exceeded* it? If we know not what is *Natural*, How do we know ther is such a thing as *Nature*? That all is not *Supernatural*, all *Miracles*, and so *disputable*, till we come to downright *Scepticism*, and doubt the *Certainty* of our *outward Senses*, whether we *See*, *Hear*, or *Feel*; or all be not a *miraculous Illusion*!

Which, because I know the *Deists* are not inclin'd to do, therefore I will return to pursue my Argument upon the *Conviction* of our *outward Senses*. Desiring only this, That they wou'd allow the *Senses* of other Men to be as *Certain* as their own. Which they cannot refuse, since without this, they can have no *Certainty* of their own.

XI. Therefore, from what has been said, the Cause is summ'd up shortly in this, That tho' we cannot *See* what was done before our Time, yet by the *Marks* which I have
laid

laid down concerning the *Certainty* of *Matters of Fact* done before our Time, we may be as much assur'd of the *Truth* of 'em, as if we saw them with our Eyes; because whatever *Matter of Fact* has all the Four *Marks* before mention'd, could never have been *Invented* and *Received* but upon the Conviction of the *outward Senses* of all those who did *Receive* it, as before is demonstrated. And therefore this *Topick* which I have chosen, does stand upon the *Conviction* even of *Mens outward Senses*. And since you have confin'd me to *one Topick*, I have not insisted upon the other, which I have only nam'd.

XII. And now it lies upon the *Deists*, if they wou'd appear as *Men of Reason*, to shew some *Matter of Fact* of former Ages, which they allow to be *True*, that has greater *Evidence* of its *Truth*, than the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses* and of *Christ*: Otherwise they cannot, with any shew of *Reason*, reject the one, and yet admit of the other.

But, I have given them greater Latitude than this, for I have shewn such *Marks* of the *Truth* of the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses* and of *Christ*, as no other *Matters of Fact* of those Times, however *True*, have, but these only: And I put it upon them to shew any *Forgery* that has *All* these *Marks*.

This is a short *issue*. Keep them close to this. This determines the *Cause* all at once.

Let

Let them produce their *Apollonius Tyanæus*, whose Life was put into *English* by the execrable * *Charles Blount*, and compar'd with all the *Wit* and *Malice* he was Master of, to the *Life* and *Miracles* of our Blessed Saviour.

Let them take Aid from all the *Legends* in the Church of *Rome*, those *Pious Cheats*, the forest *Disgraces* of *Christianity*; and which have bid the fairest, of any one Contrivance, to overturn the *Certainty* of the *Miracles* of *Christ*, and his *Apostles*, and whole *Truth* of the *Gospel*, by putting them all upon the same *Foot*; at least, they are so understood by the generality of their *Devotees*, tho' *Disown'd* and *Laugh'd at* by the *Learned*, and Men of *Sense* among them.

Let them Pick and Chuse the most probable of all the *Fables* of the *Heathen Deities*,
and

* The Hand of that Scornor, which durst write such outrageous Blasphemy against his Maker, the Divine Vengeance has made his own Executioner. Which I wou'd not have mentioned (because the like Judgment has befall'n others) but that the Theistical Club, have set this up as a Principle; and printed a Vindication of this same Blount, for murdering of himself, by way of Justification of Self murder. Which some of them have since, as well as formerly, horridly practis'd upon themselves. Therefore this is no common Judgment to which they are deliver'd, but a visible Mark set upon them, to shew how far God has forsaken them; and as a Caution to all Christians, to beware of them, and not to come near the Tents of these wicked Men, lest they perish in their Destruction, both of Soul and Body.

and see if they can find in any of these, the Four *Marks* before-mention'd.

Otherwise let them submit to the Irrefragable *Certainty* of the *Christian* Religion.

XIII. But if, notwithstanding of all that is said, the *Deists* will still contend, That all this is but *Priest-Craft*, the Invention of *Priests*, for their own Profit, &c. then they will give us an *Idea* of *Priests*, far different from what they intend: For then, we must look upon these *Priests*, not only as the *Cunningest* and *Wiseest* of *Mankind*, but we shall be tempted to adore them as *Deities*, who have such Power, as to impose, at their pleasure, upon the Senses of *Mankind*. to make them believe, that they had practis'd such *Publick Institutions*, Enacted them by *Laws*, Taught them to their *Children*, &c. when they had never done any of these Things, or ever so much as heard of them before: And then, upon the Credit of their Believing that they had done such Things as they never did, to make them further Believe, upon the same Foundation, whatever they pleas'd to impose upon them, as to Former Ages: I say, such a *Power* as this, must exceed all that is *Humane*; and, consequently, make us rank these *Priests* far above the Condition of *Mortals*.

2. Nay, this were to make them out-do all that has ever been related of the *Infernal Powers*: For though their *Leger-de-*
main

main has extended to deceive some unwary Beholders; and their Power of working some *seeming* Miracles has been great, yet it never reach'd, nor ever was suppos'd to reach so far, as to deceive the Senses of all Mankind, in Matters of such *Publick* and *Notorious* Nature as those of which we now speak, to make them believe, that they had enacted *Laws* for such *publick* Observances, continually Practis'd them, Taught them to their *Children*, and had been Instructed in them themselves, from their *Childhood*, if they had never Enacted, Practis'd, Taught, or been Taught such Things

2. And as this exceeds all the *Power* of *Hell* and *Devils*, so is it more than ever *God Almighty* has done since the Foundation of the World. None of the *Miracles* that He has shewn, or *Belief* which He has requir'd to any thing that He has *Reveal'd*, has ever contradicted the *outward Senses* of any one Man in the World, much less of all *Mankind* together. For *Miracles* being Appeals to our *outward Senses*, if they should overthrow the *Certainty* of our *outward Senses*, must destroy, with it, all their own *Certainty*, as to us; since we have no other way to judge of a *Miracle* exhibited to our *Senses*, than upon the Supposition of the *Certainty* of our *Senses*, upon which we give credit to a *Miracle*, that is shewn to our *Senses*.

4. This

4. This, by the way, is a yet unanswer'd Argument against the *Miracle* of *Transubstantiation*, and shews the Weakness of the Defence which the *Church* of *Rome* offers for it, (from whom the *Socinians* have lick'd it up, and, of late, have Glory'd much in it amongst us) That the Doctrines of the *Trinity* or *Incarnation* contain as great seeming Absurdities as that of *Transubstantiation* : For I would ask, Which of our *Senses* it is which the Doctrines of the *Trinity* or *Incarnation* do contradict ? Is it our *Seeing*, *Hearing*, *Feeling*, *Taste*, or *Smell* ? whereas *Transubstantiation* do's contradict all of these. Therefore the *Comparison* is exceedingly *short*, and out of purpose. But to Return.

If the *Christian* Religion be a *Cheat*, and nothing else but the *Invention* of *Priests* ; and carry'd on by their *Craft*, it makes their *Power* and *Wisdom* greater, than that of *Men*, *Angels*, or *Devils* ; and more than God Himself ever yet shew'd or express'd, to *Deceive* and *Impose* upon the *Senses* of *Mankind*, in such *Publick* and *Notorious Masters* of *Fact*.

XIV. And this *Miracle*, which the *Deists* must run into to avoid these recorded of *Moses* and *Christ*, is much greater, and more astonishing than all the *Scriptures* tell of *Them*.

So that these Men, who laugh at all *Miracles*, are now oblig'd to account for the
greatest

main has extended to deceive some unwary Beholders; and their Power of working some *seeming* Miracles has been great, yet it never reach'd, nor ever was suppos'd to reach so far, as to deceive the Senses of all Mankind, in Matters of such *Publick* and *Notorious* Nature as those of which we now speak, to make them believe, that they had enacted *Laws* for such *publick* Observances, continually Practis'd them, Taught them to their *Children*, and had been Instructed in them themselves, from their *Childhood*, if they had never Enacted, Practis'd, Taught, or been Taught such Things

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XIV. And this *Miracle*, which the *Deists* must run into to avoid these recorded of *Moses* and *Christ*, is much greater, and more astonishing than all the *Scriptures* tell of *Them*.

So that these Men, who laugh at all *Miracles*, are now oblig'd to account for the greatest

greatest of all, how the *Senses* of *Mankind* cou'd be impos'd upon in such *publick Matters* of *Fact*.

And how then can they make the *Priests* the most *contemptible* of all *Mankind*, since they make *Them* the sole *Authors* of this the *greatest* of *Miracles*.

XV. And since the *Deists*, (these Men of *Sense* and *Reason*) have so *vile* and *mean* an *Idea* of the *Priests* of all *Religions*, why do they not recover the World out of the *Possession* and *Government* of such *Blockheads*? Why do they suffer *Kings* and *States* to be led by *Them*; to establish their *Deceits* by *Laws*, and inflict *Penalties* upon the *Opposers* of them? Let the *Deists* try their Hands; they have been trying, and are now busie about it. And free *Liberty* they have. Yet have they not prevail'd, nor ever yet did prevail in any *Civiliz'd* or *Generous* Nation. And tho' they have some *Inroads* among the *Hotensots*, and some other the most *Brutal* Part of *Mankind*, yet are they still exploded, and *Priests* have and do *prevail* against them, among not only the *Greatest*, but *Best* Part of the World, and the most *Glorious* for *Arts*, *Learning*, and *War*.

XVI. For as the *Devil* do's ape *God*, in His *Institutions* of *Religion*; His *Feasts*, *Sacrifices*, &c. so likewise in His *Priests*, without whom, no *Religion*, whether *True* or *False*, can stand.

False

False Religion is but a Corruption of the *True*. The *True* was before it ; though it be follow'd close upon the Heels.

The *Revelation* made to *Moses*, is elder than any *History* extant in the Heathen World. The *Heathens*, in Imitation of him, pretended, likewise, to their *Revelations*: But I have given those *Marks* which distinguish them from the *True* : None of them have those *Four Marks* before-mention'd.

Now the *Deists* think all *Revelations* to be equally *Pretended*, and a *Cheat* ; and the *Priests* of all *Religions* to be the same *Contrivers* and *Juglers* ; and therefore they proclaim War equally against all, and are equally engag'd to bear the Brunt of all.

And if the Contest be only betwixt the *Deists* and the *Priests*, which of them are the Men of the greatest *Parts* and *Sense*, let the *Effects* determine it ; and let the *Deists* yield the *Victory* to their *Conquerors*, who by their own Confession, carry all the World before them.

XVII. If the *Deists* say, That this is because all the World are *Blockheads*, as well as those *Priests* who govern them ; that all are *Blockheads*, except the *Deists*, who vote themselves only to be *Men* of *Sense*. This, (besides the Modesty of it) will spoil their great and beloved *Topick*, in behalf of what they call *Natural Religion*, against the *Reveal'd*,

veal'd, viz. appealing to the *Common Reason* of *Mankind*: This they set up against *Revelation*; think this to be sufficient for all the uses of Men, here, or hereafter, (if there be any after State) and therefore that there is no use of *Revelation*: This *Common Reason* they advance as *Infallible*, at least, as the *surest* Guide, yet now cry out upon it, when it turns against them; when this *Common Reason* runs after *Revelation*, (as it always has done) then *Common Reason* is a *Beast*, and we must look for *Reason*, not from the *Common Sentiments* of *Mankind*, but only among the *Beaux*, the *Deists*.

XVIII. Therefore, if the *Deists* would avoid the *Mortification*, (which will be very uneasie to them) to *yield* and *submit* to be *Subdu'd* and *Hew'd* down before the *Priests*, whom of all *Mankind*, they *Hate* and *Despise*; if they would avoid this, let them confess, as the Truth is, That *Religion* is no Invention of *Priests*, but of *Divine* Original: That *Priests* were Instituted by the same *Author* of *Religion*; and that their *Order* is a *Perpetual* and *Living Monument* of the *Matters of Fact* of their *Religion*, Instituted from the *Time* that such *Matters of Fact* were said to be done, as the *Levites* from *Moses*; the *Apostles*, and succeeding *Clergy*, from *Christ*, to this Day. That no *Heathen Priests* can say the same: They were not appointed by the *Gods* whom

whom they served, but by others in after Ages: They cannot stand the *Test* of the *Four Rules* before-mentioned, which the *Christian Priests* can do, and they *only*. Now the *Christian Priesthood*, as Instituted by *Christ* Himself, and continu'd by *Succession* to this Day, being as *Impregnable* and *Flagrant* a *Testimony* to the Truth of the *Matters of Fact* of *Christ*, as the *Sacraments*, or any other Publick *Institutions*: Besides that, if the *Priesthood* were taken away, the *Sacraments*, and other Publick *Institutions*, which are administred by their Hands, must fall with them: Therefore the *Devil* has been most busie, and bent his greatest Force, in all Ages, against the *Priesthood*, knowing, that if *That* goes down, *All* go's with it.

XIX. With the *Deists*, in this Cause, are join'd the *Quakers*, and other of our *Dissenters*, who throw off the *Succession* of our *Priesthood*, (by which only it can be demonstrated) together with the *Sacraments* and publick *Festivals*. And if the *Devil* could have prevail'd to have these dropt, the *Christian Religion* would lose the most *Undeniable* and *Demonstrative* Proof for the Truth of the *Matter of Fact* of our *Saviour*, upon which the Truth of his *Doctrine* do's depend. Therefore we may see the *Artifice* and *Malice* of the *Devil*, in all these Attempts. And let those wretched *Instruments* whom he Ignorant-

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ly, (and some, by a misguided Zeal) has deluded thus to undermine *Christianity*, now at last look back and see the *Snare* in which they have been taken: For if they had prevail'd, or ever shou'd, *Christianity* dies with them. At least, it will be render'd *precarious*, as a thing of which no *Certain Proof* can be given. Therefore let those of them, who have any Zeal for the Truth, bless God that they have not prevail'd; and quickly leave them; and let all others be aware of them.

And let us Consider and Honour the *Priesthood*, *Sacraments*, and other *Publick Institutions* of *Christ*, not only as *Means of Grace*, and *Helps to Devotion*, but as the *Great Evidences* of the *Christian Religion*.

Such *Evidences* as no *pretended Revelation* ever had, or can have. Such as do plainly distinguish it from all foolish *Legends* and *Impositions* whatsoever.

XX. And now, last of all, if one Word of Advice would not be lost, upon Men who think so unmeasurably of themselves, as the *Deists*, you may represent to them, what a Condition they are in, who spend that *Life and Sense*, which God has given them, in Ridiculing the Greatest of His *Blessings*, His *Revelations of Christ*, and by *Christ*, to Redeem those from *Eternal Misery*, who shall *Believe* in Him, and Obey His

His Laws. And that God, in His Wonderful *Mercy* and *Wisdom*, has so Guarded His *Revelations*, as that it is past the Power of *Men* or *Devils* to *Counterfeit*: And that there is no *Denying* of them, unless we will be so absurd, as to deny not only the *Reason*, but the *Certainty* of the *outward Senses*, not only of *One*, or *Two*, or *Three*, but of *Mankind* in General. That this Case is so very Plain, that nothing but want of Thought can hinder any to Discover it. That they must yield it to be so Plain, unless they can shew some *Forgery*, which has all the *Four Marks*, before set down. But if they cannot do this, they must quit their Cause, and yield a Happy *Victory* over themselves: Or else sit down under all that *Ignominy*, with which they have loaded the *Priests*, of being, not only the most *Pernicious*, but (what will Gall them more) the most *Inconsiderate*, and *Inconsiderable* of *Mankind*.

Therefore, let them not think it an Undervaluing of their *Worthiness*, that their whole Cause is comprised within so narrow a Compass: And no more Time bestow'd upon it than it is worth.

But let them, rather, Reflect, how far they have been all this Time from *Christianity*; whose *Rudiments* they are yet to learn! How far from the Way of *Salvation*! How far the Race of their Lives is

run, before they have set one Step in the Road to Heaven. And therefore, how much Diligence they ought to use, to redeem all that Time they have lost, lest they lose themselves for ever; and be convinc'd, by a dreadful Experience, when it is too late, That the *Gospel* is a Truth, and of the last Consequence.

F I N I S.



THE
CONTENTS.

P R E F A C E.

- I. **A** *Brief Account of Apollonius Tyanæus.* Page i.
2. *Concerning Charles Blount, &c.* p. xi.
-

I. **T** *HE Pretence of the Deists against all
Revelation: With the Short Method
propos'd, to prove the Truth of the Christian
Religion.* Page 1.

II. *That the whole of this Cause do's depend upon
the Truth of those Matters of Fact, which are
said to be done by Moses and Christ.* p. 4.

1. *The Method taken to prove them.* ibid.
2. *Four Rules, whereby to ascertain the Truth
of any Matter of Fact.* p. 5.
3. *The Two First Rules make it impossible to
Impose any Cheat, at the Time when the
Matter of Fact is said to be done.* ibid.

4. *The*

The CONTENTS.

4. *The Two last Rules, secure equally, against the Imposing of it afterwards, in succeeding Ages.* p. 6.

III. *That these Marks, or Rules, do all meet in the Matters of Fact of Moses, and of Christ. But not in those of Mahomet, or of the Heathen Deities.* p. 7.

As to }	1. Moses.	ibid.
	2. Christ.	p. 22.
	3. Mahomet.	p. 24.
	And the Heathen Deities.	p. 25.

IV. *The Deists are Challeng'd to shew any Fable, that has all the FOUR RULES, or MARKS, before mention'd.* p. 26.

V. *Many Things are True, which have not all these Marks. But that nothing can be False, which has them all.* p. 27.

VI. *Especially, where the Importance of such things is great.* p. 28.

VII. *Other Topicks are only mention'd, but not here insisted upon, whence usually the Proofs for the Christian Religion are taken; as the Truth of the Apostles.* p. 29.

VIII. *The Attestation of Enemies.* p. 31.

IX. *The fulfilling of Prophecies.* ibid.
X. *Of*

The CONTENTS.

X. Of True and False Miracles. p. 37.

XI. *But the present Topick concludes necessarily, upon the Conviction of Mens outward Senses, and so is obvious to all.* p. 40.

XII. *None of the Popish Legends, or other Forgeries, can shew the Four Marks before-mention'd.* p. 41.

XIII. *If Reveal'd Religion be Priest-Craft, it makes the Priests to be,* p. 43.

1. *The Wisest of all Mankind.* ibid.

2. *More Mighty than all the Infernal Powers, or Angels of Heaven.* ibid.

3. *To do more than ever God has done.* p. 44.

4. *Transubstantiation touch'd upon this Point.* p. 45.

XIV. *The Deists, who laugh at Miracles, run themselves upon the greatest of all.* ibid.

XV. *They are forc'd to confess, that the Priests are superior to them in Wisdom.* p. 46.

XVI. *False Religion is an Imitation and Corruption of the True.* ibid.

XVII. *The*

The CONTENTS.

XVII. *The Confusion and Contradiction of the Deists, in their Notion of Natural Religion, and in their recurring to the Common Reason of Mankind.* p. 47.

XVIII. *Religion is not the Invention of Priests; but Priests are the great Guard of Religion, therefore They are most struck at, by the Devil and his Agents.* p. 48.

XIX. *The Quakers, and other Dissenters, join herein with the Deists.* p. 49.

XX. *Advice to the Deists.* p. 50.



ERRATA.

PAGE 18. l. 3. r. *Sand*, ibid. l. ult. r. *where*, ibid. after *there*, r. *we*. p. 22. l. 16. dele *we*. p. 23. for *Matth.* xviii. r. xxviii on the Margin. p. 25. l. 12. dele *the*. p. 27. l. 21. r. *no manner*. p. 30. l. 7. after *can it be*, r. *sail*.

